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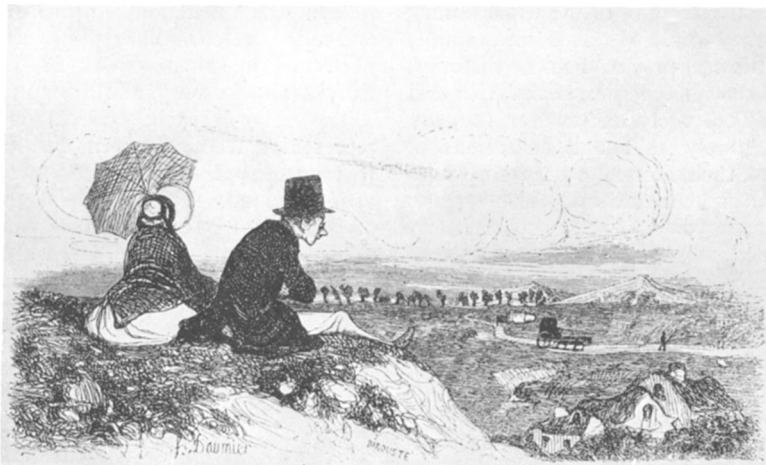
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VIGNETTE BY HONORÉ DAUMIER IN *LES FRANÇAIS PEINTS PAR EUX-MÊMES*, 1841

## ILLUSTRATED BOOKS IN THE MUSEUM



ONE of the primary definitions agreed upon four years ago at the time the Department of Prints was established, was that a print was merely a printed picture and that any printed picture of artistic merit or of inter-

est as throwing light upon the history of the graphic arts fell within the class of material to be collected, irrespective of the particular technique in which it was carried out, the purpose for which it was made, or the form in which it was found. This being so, among the very first purchases made for the new department was the French translation of Goethe's *Faust* of 1828, the illustrations in which were the famous set of original lithographs by Delacroix. Since that time a small collection of illustrated books has been made, each item in which has been justified solely on the score of its illustrations, no thought having been given in their selection to the questions whether or not they were fine as examples of typography or binding, or were particularly sought for by book-collectors.

In this the Museum has merely followed the example set for it by the print room of the British Museum and the Berlin Kupferstich-Kabinet, each of which constantly adds illustrated books to its collections. As the British Museum contains one of the largest and most valuable collections in the world of old and choice books, that institution has worked out a rule of convenience in accordance with which its print room acquires only books illustrated by known artists, while books illustrated by anonymous artists, no matter how important or beautiful their work, go to the library. The Berlin Cabinet not being part of an institution which also has a great library acquires books illustrated by both classes of artists. The Metropolitan resembling Berlin in that it has no great general library, its print room has followed the example there set.

The number of books that has been acquired by the Department through either gift or purchase has as yet been small, although in consequence of a recent transfer to it from the Museum Library of the more important illustrated books which have accumulated there during the last fifty years, the Print Room now has enough to fill comfortably a small book-case. They are of the most varied kind, running in date from 1479 to 1919, and were they to

be classified according to the usual library methods they would be placed, for example, among Bibles, prayer books, histories, dramas, and even botanies, arithmetics, and children's books. Here, however, they are regarded purely as bound collections of prints and their literary contents play no part in their classification. Just because of this great diversity the collection is remarkably representative for one that has been deliberately in the making for only four years, and it is confidently expected that in the future it will develop into a collection which, while small, will nevertheless adequately enough supplement the collection of single prints.

At the present time the book-case contains little groups of early German, French, Dutch, and Italian books, a few seventeenth-century examples, mainly Dutch, several French and English eighteenth-century plate books, and a larger number of those made during the last century. Naturally most of the more famous books of each group are missing, but in spite of this each of the larger groups is actually represented by one or more excellent and typical examples. In the following quick survey it is impossible to give complete lists, save in the fewest instances, and many of the books in the collection are passed by without mention.

Among the early German woodcut books may be mentioned the Breydenbach Itinerary of 1486, the Schatzbehalter of 1491, and the Nuremberg Chronicle of 1493, respectively the first, second, and third German books the illustrations in which can be assigned to definitely nameable artists. The next following generation of German book illustrators and decorators is better represented, there being no less than thirteen books with woodcuts by Dürer printed between 1497 and 1532, and including such items as the *Celtis*, *Quatuor Libri Amorum* of 1502, the *Apocalypse* of 1511, and, of the same year, a made-up but very brilliant copy of the *Life of the Virgin*. Other masterpieces of this period are the *Old Testament* series of woodcuts by Hans Holbein the younger in the first edition (Lyons, 1538), the *Typi in Apocalypsi Johannis* of 1539 by Hans Sebald

Beham, the Fuchs and Brunfels Herbals, and miscellaneous volumes illustrated with woodcuts by such artists as Cranach, Burgkmair, Baldung, and Springinklee.

The early French woodcut is poorly represented, the only item printed prior to 1500 being the *Pigouchet-Vostre Horae* of August 22, 1498, in which the book of hours is reputed to have reached its highest excellence. The following period is better shown, there being *Horae* from the press of Kerver, one containing the *Tory cuts*, and other books illustrated by Jean Cousin, Bernard Salomon, and such artists as the anonymous illustrator of the charming little *Tableau de Cébès* of 1543. Among the Italian books there is however the very rare Venetian *Legendario di Sancti* of 1514 (Essling 686), containing many of the original cuts from Jean du Pré's 1489 edition of the *Legenda Aurea*.

The Dutch book is the most poorly represented of all, there being only four early items, the *Leven ons Heren* of 1495 (Proctor 9146), with some of the best of the early Dutch woodcuts, a *Fasciculus Mirre* of 1518, a little guide to Rome of the same year, and the *Brabant Chronicle* printed by Jan van Doesborch in 1530 (Proctor 29). The *Fasciculus Mirre* is remarkable as containing deceptively close copies of the well-known (and unique) *Delbecq-Schreiber Passion*, which is reputed to be the most beautiful of the early lower Rhenish *Passion* suites.

In Italy the situation is better covered than elsewhere. Rome is represented by an undescribed, undated, and unsigned edition of the *Mirabilia Romae*, printed in the types used by Besicken in 1493. From Verona, likewise, we can point to but a single book, but that an unusually important and interesting one, the famous *Aesop* of 1479, which takes rank among the greater books of the Italian Renaissance. It is hoped that space will be found for a notice of it in some not too distant BULLETIN. Fano and Como also have but single books to their credit, respectively the *Vigerius* of 1507 and the *Vitruvius* of 1521, the latter of which played such an important part in spreading a knowledge of Italian architectural design

through Europe. The greater part of the Italian books in the collection, as is natural, come from the presses of Venice, and although some of the most famous books are missing there are a number of greater rarity

ling 406), all of 1490. There are also Justiniano's *Doctrina della Vita Monastica* of 1494 (Hain 9477), which contains one of the earliest woodcuts after a painting, and Ratdolt's little *Sacrobosco* of



FROM CAPRANICA, *ARTE DEL BEN MORIRE*, VENICE, 1490

and equal artistic importance. Among these may be mentioned Tупpo's *Life of Aesop* (Hain 354), of 1492, Capranica's *Arte del ben morire* (Hain 4402) with its beautiful frontispiece and interesting copies of the German block book *Ars Moriendi*, and the *Meditations of Bonaventura* (Ess-

ling 1485 (Hain 14111), which deserves special mention as containing what as yet are the earliest known woodcuts to have been printed in color. A number of the famous series of fifteenth-century woodcuts are present in sixteenth-century editions, among others there being *Livy*, *Petrarch*, and the

Lives of the Fathers. Among the sixteenth-century Venetian items are the Paciolli, *De divina proportione*, of 1509, with the designs by Leonardo, the *De nola opusculum*, of 1514, which is the earliest sixteenth-century book with copperplate illustrations and the first to contain plates by a definitely nameable engraver, the *Cento Favole Morali*, illustrated by Titian's pupil Verdisotti, and the costume book of Cesare Vecellio, Titian's nephew. Florence, on the other hand, is represented by but few books, there being only seven items, although each of these is important. The *Calandri* of 1491 (Kristeller 77a), is not only one of the earliest illustrated Florentine books but the first arithmetic in a vulgar tongue, and not improbably the most beautiful mathematical book ever made. In addition to this there is a lone Savonarola (K. 382 c), the *Confessionario* of Cherubino da Firenze (K. 103), the *Rappresentatione di S. Margherita* (K. 263 e), that of S. Christina of 1554, which apparently is undescribed, and an undated edition with twelve cuts of Bonaventura's *Meditations* (?K. 69 b). The most important of the Florentine books, not only for its lavish illustration, but also because of its fame, is Frezzi's *Quadrifoglio* of 1508 (K. 164). This last book is undoubtedly the most noteworthy book in the collection, and a special article should be devoted to it in the BULLETIN before long. In the ornament collection there are a number of Italian lace books, such as the *Vavassore* of 1532, two *Pagans*, and the *Ostaus* of 1567.

The eighteenth century in France is not well represented, there being only a very beautiful copy of the first issue of the *Baisers* of Dorat in its original cartonnage, and in addition the *Heptameron*, the *Decameron*, and the *Idylles* of Berquin.

In the nineteenth century the number of items becomes larger again. In England there are several of the *Bewicks*, and two scrap books containing impressions from a very large number of his blocks, the *Microcosm* of London, Thornton's *Virgil*, with the woodcuts by Blake, Blake's *Job* and *Songs of Innocence and Experience*—this the copy specially illuminated by Blake for

his friend Calvert—the Tennyson of 1857 and Millais' *Parables of our Lord*, together with a number of books illustrated by Keene, Crane, Caldecott, and Hugh Thomson. From France come Gigoux's *Gil Blas* of 1835, the *Paul et Virginie* of 1838, Nodier's *Expedition des Portes de Fer* of 1844, *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, the *Contes Remois* of 1858 (a copy signed by Meissonnier), a fine paper copy of Vierge's *Pablo de Segovie* of 1882, reputed to be the first book of artistic importance illustrated by the use of "process blocks." Of later French items there are the *Farce de Maître Pathelin*, with original engravings by Boutet de Monvel, several volumes containing original lithographs by Toulouse-Lautrec, and a volume of woodcuts by Felix Vallotton. Nineteenth-century Germany is very poorly represented, there being only a handful of things illustrated by Menzel, Schwind, and Richter, and the curious and rare *Ganze Geheimnis des Steindrucks* of 1810, which was the first book to be published on lithography.

In addition to these books with text there are a number of bound collections of prints, such for instance as the original issue of Canaletto's *Vedute*, Goya's *Caprices* in its original binding, Girtin's *Views of Paris*, Rowlandson's *World in Miniature*, Perelle's *Views of Paris and its environs*, and Gavarni's set of lithographs of *Les Lorettes*.

This hasty survey, it is hoped, will serve to point out the progress that has been made in this direction and the type of collection that is aimed at far better than could be done by any explanation or description. While the illustrated book has and always will have a secondary place in the development of the Print Room, it is nevertheless necessary that it should be properly represented, for otherwise much of the very best that has been done both on wood and on the stone would be lacking. Comparatively little attention has been paid in the pages of the BULLETIN to this side of the print collection, but it is desired that its collection of books will not be ignored and that the book-collecting friends of the Museum will remember its interest in these things.

W. M. I., Jr.